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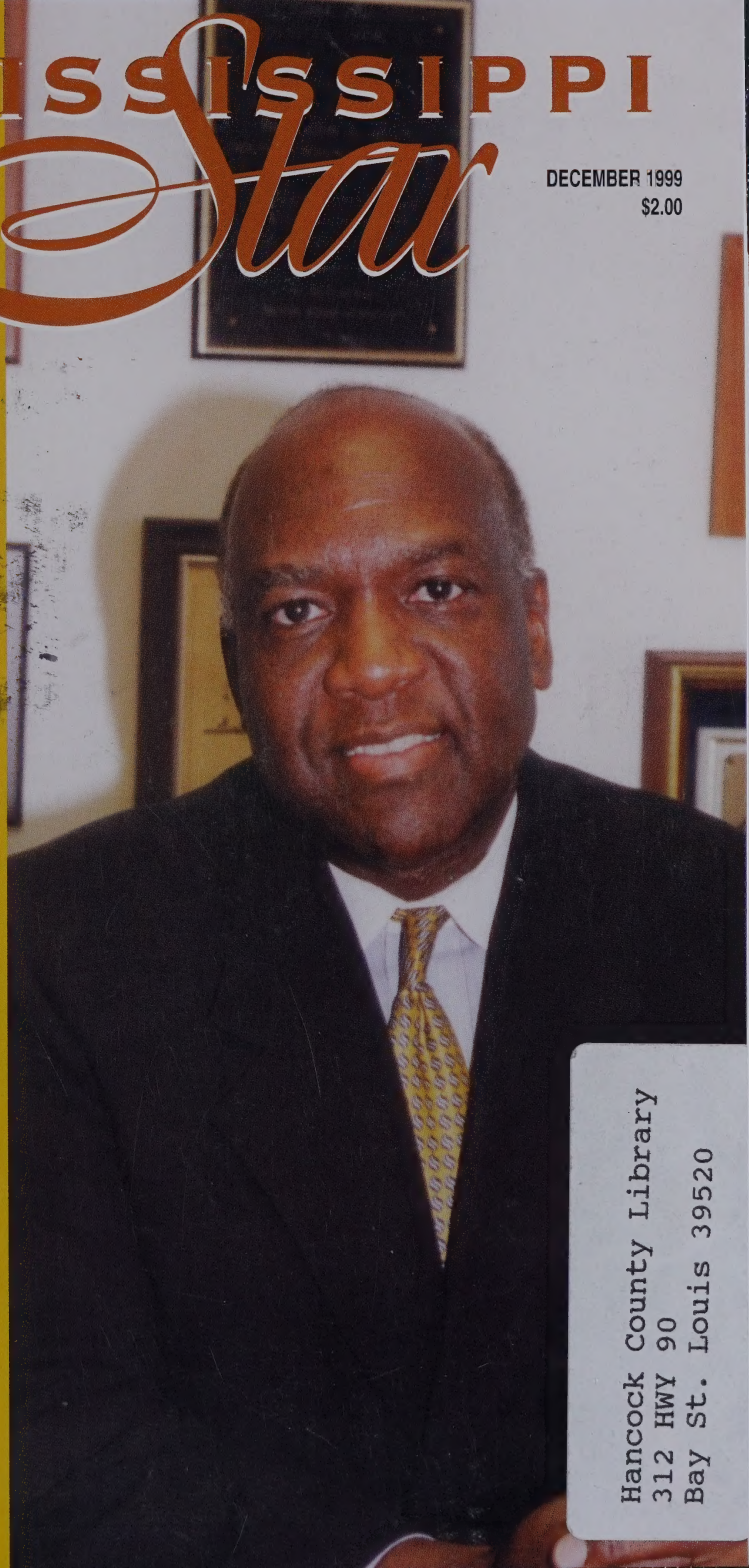

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MISSISSIPPI Star

VOL. 4 NO. 4 DECEMBER 1999

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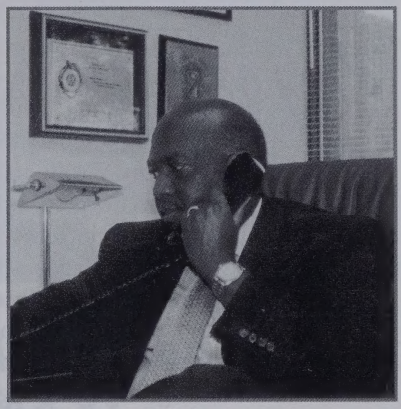

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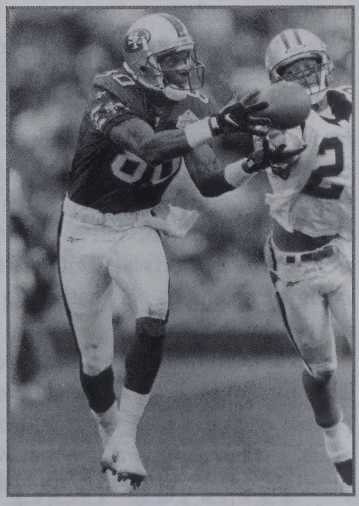

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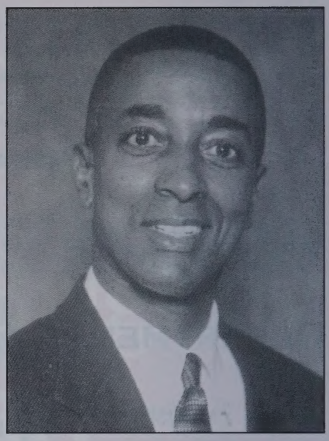
PUBLISHER'S PAGE



Maurice Singleton

Well, this is my last publisher's page of the century. Now that sounds strange. It almost suggests that there will be a very dramatic turn or change or a shift of gears as I approach what has been commonly referred to as the "next millennium." The truth of the matter is over the course of the next month, I will be doing the same things I've been doing over the course of the past three and a half years in order to get *Mississippi Star* completed and mailed out to our readers.

But this is not to say that I do not want to approach the "new millennium" with a new and fresh approach, because I really do. I want to take advantage of this opportunity at the starting point of another thousand years to begin again with renewed energy from a fresh attitude that will stimulate more energy, excitement and enthusiasm for what I do.

I have been truly blessed to have met and interviewed so many interesting people over the past three and a half years. I believe in the adage that we are products of all the people we meet. I truly believe that the people I meet enhance the quality of my life. I understand that the people I interview and write about as well as the people who share feedback of my work – whether positive or negative - have a very favorable impact on me. I am proud to say that when I see a likable quality in a person, I sometimes try to adapt that quality to my personal style. I "break off" a little piece for myself.

As I look back over some of the stories we published in *Mississippi Star* during the past year, I can honestly say that I have learned a lot. Alda Bryant's candid story of her battle with drug addiction provided us with hope. Rip Daniels' business savvy summarized in the February issue is like a handbook for success in business. The professional way in which John Whitfield approaches his responsibilities as judge has role model value to more than youth (March Youth Issue). And certainly, George and Evelina Watson provide a wonderful example of spousal teamwork in the April *Family Issue.*

Sharon Singleton's battle with breast cancer candidly and eloquently

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expressed in the May *Women's Issue* was enlightening, but it was also a demonstration of incredible courage and inspiration. William Martin showed us the value of our roles as parents as he shared with us the value his parents played in his life and the lives of the citizens of Cleveland, Mississippi in the June *Men's Issue.* In the July issue, Robert Boone, an executive with Isle of Capri, Inc., showed us how he balances his corporate responsibilities with a genuine care and concern for the community.

Philip Terrell, Ph.D. showed us that economic resource is only part of the educational success equation. His success as superintendent of Pass Christian Schools is a testament to great leadership. Dr. Gilbert R. Mason Sr. showed us the importance of taking risks and standing up for ourselves and fighting for what is important. Dr. Mason shows us that the long-term battle can be won when we keep our "eyes on the prize."

In the October issue, "Coach" Stepney showed us how small gestures can result in great returns when we invest quality time in young people. The NAACP presidents helped define the current battles they are facing in their efforts to seek fairness and justice for South Mississippi citizens. And finally, we learn how much we grow when we work to empower others. Dr. John Kelly is a refreshing example of positive energy working for the good of the community.

It has been a wonderful year and culmination to the old millennium.

Happy Holidays!

ADDENDUM

In the November issue of Mississippi Star, Lieutenant Colonel Patrick Barnes and his family were included in the People section. We failed to mention that Lieutenant Colonel Patrick Barnes is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Barnes of Pass Christian, MS.

Letters to the Publisher

should be 100 words or less.

Star Calendar: Events of interest to South Mississippians should be submitted on your organization's letterhead, specifying the date, time, place of event and a number of contact. Submissions should be received by the twentieth day of the preceding month.

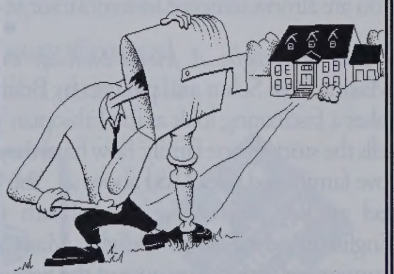
Be sure to include a daytime telephone number.

Mail submissions to

Mississippi Star, P.O. Box 2651, Bay St. Louis, MS 39521.

Mississippi Star reserves the right to refuse or decline to publish any submission.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year from All of Us at MISSISSIPPI *Star*



MOVING? RECENTLY MOVED? ABOUT TO MOVE?

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BOOK STOP

SHARE A BOOK WITH A CHILD AND SHARE A MOMENT OF LOVE!

by Herta Smith

Happy Holidays! Remember when most of us just said Merry Christmas? It is a sign of the times and our increased awareness of our communities' diversity that we now recognize and celebrate our different beliefs. This year three of the world's major religions will celebrate their most holy days in December. This only happens approximately ten times in a century. I take that as a good omen for the new century! I wish all of you a peaceful, joyous season filled with family and friends. See you next year. This month's reviewed books will be donated to Pass Christian Elementary School. Visit your local bookstore, it is a wonderland any time of year, but this time of year it is truly a magical place.

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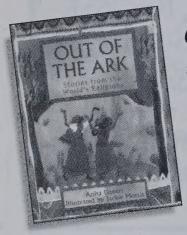

Out of the Ark, Stories from the Worlds' Religions written by Anita Ganeri and illustrated by Jackie Morris and published by Harcourt Brace & Company. This is a great book. It tells stories from many of the world's religions, but it has them grouped by themes such as creation stories, flood stories, animal stories and so on. It lets you compare one religion's beliefs with another in a most entertaining and enlightening way. I especially liked the Muslim story of Maryam's Son. This is a creation story, the story of how Allah's son came to the world. The illustrations are beautiful. You are almost tempted to remove some of them from the book and have them framed.

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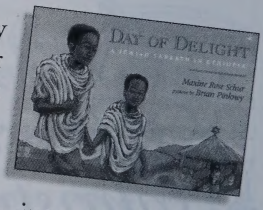
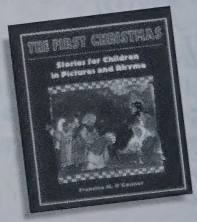


Day of Delight, A Jewish Sabbath in Ethiopia written by Maxine Rose Schur and pictures by Brian Pinkney. Ms. Schur takes a fascinating look at the Ethiopian Jews of Beta Israel. It tells the story of one family, how hard they work and how they love family and their God above all. You can feel the joy they feel as they prepare for the Sabbath that translated into English means Day of Delight. Many of these people have since immigrated to Israel because of the fighting in their homeland. The way of life described in this book is rapidly being lost but well worth remembering and reading about.

• • • • •

The First Christmas written by Francine M. O'Connor, illustrated by Bartholomew and published by Gramercy Books. This is a really good book to read aloud to your child or to read together. The book has wonderful rhymes:

THE LADY AND THE ANGEL
On a quiet night in Nazareth
God's special angel came to call
On a lady by the name of Mary,
The most beautiful lady of all.



Essay Contest

HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS & SENIORS

THEME:

A NEW MILLENNIUM: A NEW BEGINNING

TWO PRIZES: $100 Savings Bond

Winning Essays will be published in March 2000 Issue of Mississippi Star.

CONTEST RULES: Essays should be 250-300 words in length and must be typed (double spaced). All entries must be received by February 15,2000 at the following address:

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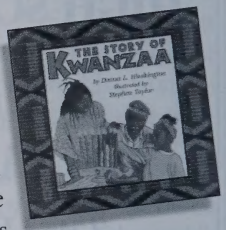
The author gives you a real feel for how Mary loved Jesus as only a mother could. She helped him take his first steps and kissed his bruises when he fell. This is a really beautiful book.

• • • • •

The Story of Kwanzaa written by Donna Washington, illustrated by Stephen Taylor and published by Harper Collins. This book walks you through Kwanzaa from the history to the celebration and even has some projects to make at the back of the book since participants exchange gifts at Kwanzaa. These special gifts teach about African heritage.



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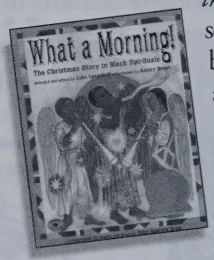
LAST BUT NOT LEAST!

What a Morning, The Christmas Story in Black Spirituals selected and edited by John Langstaff and illustrated by Ashley Bryan. The arrangements for singing and piano are by John Andrew Ross. "Make a joyful noise" is exactly what this little book does. The story of Christmas is done in song and the sheet music is included. A must have for every music teacher and musician. This book is a Coretta Scott King Honor Book and ALA Notable Book and a Booklist Editorial Choice.



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Something to Pray About...

GOD WITH US

by Stacy James Mackey

"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us"

Matthew 1:23. This text is taken from what some people call the Christmas story. Jesus was born and lived among humanity. Now, following the resurrection, the Holy Spirit dwells within each believer making Christ ever present. The key word here is "believer." Believers aren't concerned about how many Christmas presents are under the tree because their celebration isn't based on pretty wrapped boxes.

To the believer, "God with us" means the purest form of love imaginable exists in our lives. To the believer, "God with us" means someone is always on our side wanting the very best for us. "God with us" means we can smile at our enemies because they don't have power over us. It means that we can have peace of mind when facing daily challenges. When stress on the job is eating away at others, we can find joy. It means we don't go to bed hungry, because HE is our provider. It means our bodies will be clothed. It means our dreams are attainable. It means when bad things happen, we know that there is always a silver lining. It means that we have no need to fear death because the grave has no sting. It means that my name is written in the Book of Life. And it means that there's room in the mansion for me! There's an amazing confidence in knowing for yourself that God IS with us.

Share it with your family and shout it to your neighbors that God is with us. The only question that remains is, "Is God with YOU?"

I hope I've given you something to pray about.

Happy Birthday Jesus!

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Mississippians in the National Football League

by Maurice E. Singleton, Jr.

AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

BALTIMORE RAVENS

EVERETT LINDSAY
Position: Center
6'4", 302 pounds
NFL Experience: 5th year
College: Mississippi

STEVON MOORE
Position: Safety
5'11", 210 pounds
NFL Experience: 9th year
College: Mississippi

FERNANDO SMITH
Position: Defensive End
6'6", 287 pounds
NFL Experience: 6th year
College: Jackson State
Hometown: Wiggins, MS

BUFFALO BILLS

ROBERT HICKS
Position: Tackle
6'7", 278 pounds
NFL Experience: 2nd year
College: Mississippi State

ERIC MOULDS
Position: Wide Receiver
6'0", 204 pounds
NFL Experience: 4th year
College: Mississippi State

MARLO PERRY
Position: Linebacker
6'4", 245 pounds
NFL Experience: 5th year
College: Jackson State

CLEVELAND BROWNS

JOHN AVERY
Position: Runningback
5'9", 190 pounds
NFL Experience: 2nd year
College: Mississippi

JOHN THIERRY
Position: Defensive End
6'4", 265 pounds
NFL Experience: 6th year
College: Alcorn State

JAMES WILLIAMS
Position: Linebacker
6'0", 246 pounds
NFL Experience: 9th year
College: Mississippi State

DENVER BRONCOS

ERIC BROWN
Position: Safety
6'0", 210 pounds
NFL Experience: 2nd year
College: Mississippi State

NATE WAYNE
Position: Linebacker
6'0", 230 pounds
NFL Experience: 9th year
College: Mississippi

JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS

STEVE LINDSEY
Position: Kicker
6'1", 173 pounds
NFL Experience: 1st year
College: Mississippi

JIMMY SMITH
Position: Wide Receiver
6'1", 205 pounds
NFL Experience: 6th year
College: Jackson State

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

JOE HORN
Position: Wide Receiver
6'1", 206 pounds
NFL Experience: 4th year
College: Itawamba Junior College

OAKLAND RAIDERS

RICHARD HARVEY
Position: Linebacker
6'1", 235 pounds
NFL Experience: 9th year
College: Tulane

MIAMI DOLPHINS

TIM BOWENS
Position: Tackle
6'4", 315 pounds
NFL Experience: 6th year
College: Mississippi

TERRELL BUCKLEY
Position: Cornerback
5'9", 180 pounds
NFL Experience: 8th year
College: Florida State

JAMES JOHNSON
Position: Runningback
6'1", 230 pounds
NFL Experience: Rookie
College: Mississippi State

BRENT SMITH
Position: Guard
6'5", 315 pounds
NFL Experience: 2nd year
College: Mississippi State

PATRICK SURTAIN
Position: Cornerback
5'11", 190 pounds
NFL Experience: 2nd year
College: Southern Mississippi

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

HAROLD SHAW
Position: Runningback
6', 228 pounds
NFL Experience: 2nd year
College: Southern Mississippi

LARRY WHIGHAM
Position: Safety
6'2", 205 pounds
NFL Experience: 6th year
College: Northeastern Louisiana

NEW YORK JETS

BOBBY HAMILTON
Position: Defensive End
6'5", 280 pounds
NFL Experience: 4th year
College: Southern Mississippi

RANDY THOMAS
Position: Guard
6'4", 301 pounds
NFL Experience: Rookie
College: Mississippi State

PITTSBURGH STEELERS

CARLOS EMMONS
Position: Linebacker
5'10", 250 pounds
NFL Experience: 2nd year
College: Arkansas State

DESHEA TOWNSEND
Position: Cornerback
5'10", 175 pounds
NFL Experience: 2nd year
College: Alabama

KEVIN HENRY
Position: Defensive End
6'4", 285 pounds
NFL Experience: 7th year
College: Mississippi State

SAN DIEGO CHARGERS

NORMAN HAND
Position: Defensive Tackle
6'3", 313 pounds
NFL Experience: 4th year
College: Mississippi

FRED MCCRARY
Position: Fullback
6', 235 pounds
NFL Experience: 3rd year
College: Mississippi State

SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

FRED THOMAS
Position: Cornerback
5'9", 172 pounds
NFL Experience: 4th year
College: Tennessee Martin

GRANT WILLIAMS
Position: Tackle
6'7", 323 pounds
NFL Experience: 4th year
College: Louisiana Tech

TENNESSEE TITANS

GREG FAVORS
Position: Linebacker
6'1", 244 pounds
NFL Experience: 2nd year
College: Mississippi State

STEVE MCNAIR
Position: Quarterback
6'2", 225 pounds
NFL Experience: 5th year
College: Alcorn State

PERRY PHENIX
Position: Safety
5'11", 210 pounds
NFL Experience: 2nd year
College: Mississippi

NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

ATLANTA FALCONS

REGGIE KELLY
Position: Tight End
6'3", 250 pounds
NFL Experience: Rookie
College: Mississippi State

ARIZONA CARDINALS

TERRY HARDY
Position: Tight End
6'4", 271 pounds
NFL Experience: 2nd year
College: Southern Mississippi

LESTER HOLMES
Position: Guard
6'5", 330 pounds
NFL Experience: 6th year
College: Jackson State

DENNIS MCKINLEY
Position: Fullback
6'2", 245 pounds
NFL Experience: Rookie
College: Mississippi State

COREY SEARS
Position: Defensive Tackle
6'3", 300 pounds
NFL Experience: 2nd year
College: Mississippi State

CAROLINA PANTHERS

KRIS MANGUM
Position: Tight End
6'4", 249 pounds
NFL Experience: 2nd year
College: Mississippi

WESLEY WALLS
Position: Tight End
6'5", 250 pounds
NFL Experience: 10th year
College: Mississippi

CHICAGO BEARS

WALT HARRIS
Position: Cornerback
5'11", 195 pounds
NFL Experience: 4th year
College: Mississippi State

SHANE MATTHEWS
Position: Quarterback
6'3", 196 pounds
NFL Experience: 3rd year
College: Florida

DETROIT LIONS

KELVIN PRITCHETT
Position: Defensive Tackle
6'3", 319 pounds
NFL Experience: 9th year
College: Mississippi

GREEN BAY PACKERS

COREY BRADFORD
Position: Wide Receiver
6'0", 205 pounds
NFL Experience: 2nd year
College: Jackson State

DONALD DRIVER
Position: Wide Receiver
6', 175 pounds
NFL Experience: Rookie
College: Alcorn State

BRETT FAVRE
Position: Quarterback
6'2", 220 pounds
NFL Experience: 9th year
College: Southern Mississippi

MINNESOTA VIKINGS

DWAYNE RUDD
Position: Linebacker
6'2", 238 pounds
NFL Experience: 3rd year
College: Alabama

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

ASHLEY AMBROSE
Position: Cornerback
5'10", 185 pounds
NFL Experience: 8th year
College: Mississippi Valley State

DARYL TERRELL
Position: Tackle
6'4", 305 pounds
NFL Experience: 1st year
College: Southern Mississippi

NEW YORK GIANTS

TOBY MYLES
Position: Tackle
6'5", 315 pounds
NFL Experience: 2nd year
College: Jackson State

PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

TORRANCE SMALL
Position: Wide Receiver
6'3", 209 pounds
NFL Experience: 8th year
College: Alcorn State

ST. LOUIS RAMS

DEXTER MCCLEON
Position: Cornerback
5'10", 200 pounds
NFL Experience: 3rd year
College: Clemson

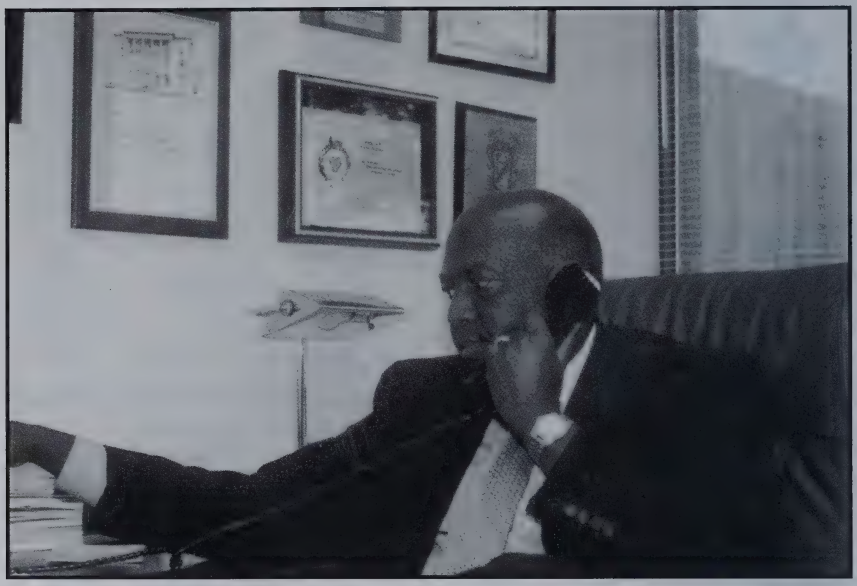
SAN FRANCISCO FORTY-NINERS

JEFF POSEY
Position: Defensive End
6'4", 240 pounds
NFL Experience: 2nd year
College: Southern Mississippi

JERRY RICE
Position: Wide Receiver
6'2", 196 pounds
NFL Experience: 14th year
College: Mississippi Valley State

Dr. John R. Kelly Appointed American Cancer Society Chairman of the Board

By Maurice E. Singleton, Jr.



Dr. John R. Kelly begins what will be a busy year of communication, travel and raising money for the American Cancer Society.

Dr. John R. Kelly is the Chairman of the National Board for the American Cancer Society. As Chairman of the Board, Dr. Kelly is responsible for establishing and enforcing policy for the eighty-six year old organization that funds cancer research and serves as an advocate for cancer patients as well as for the general public by educating and informing them on reducing the risks of cancer.

The rise to the top level of the ACS for the Utica, Mississippi native culminates twenty-two years of involvement with the organization. He has worked at every level of the organization, beginning back in the 1970s. His leadership involvement at the national level began in 1991, and since that time, the climb to Chairman of the National Board has been steady.

As chairman, Dr. Kelly's chief responsibility will be to make sure that the organization is on track toward achieving the goals which have been set for realization by the year 2015. The 2015 goals are to: (1) reduce the rate of cancer deaths by 50%; and (2) reduce the inci-

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MISSISSIPPI *Star*

- A Look Back at the 20th Century
- A Fresh Start in 2000

Dr. Kelly poses with George and Barbara Bush. As Chairman of the Board of the American Cancer Society, Dr. Kelly meets and interacts with U.S. leaders as well as international personalities in his efforts to achieve fundraising goals of the organization.

dence of cancer by 25%.

"I am responsible for directing the board of directors, actually guiding the policies of that board and making sure that board meets its goal during this year," said Dr. Kelly. "Today, about 563,00 people yearly are dying from cancer. We are saying that by the year 2015 we will cut that number in half.

"This year a million people will have been told that they have cancer of some kind. The second goal is to reduce this number by 25%. My goal by next year is to make sure that by the end of the year we are tracking toward these goals."

The goals of the ACS may appear ambitious. However, given the advances in cancer research and the pressure the ACS and other organizations and individuals have put on tobacco companies, the climate appears to be right for positive information and news about cancer.

During the past several years, dramatic changes have occurred in the way cigarette companies market their products in the United States. Cigarette companies no longer advertise their products on billboards and teenagers are no longer targets of cigarette company marketing campaigns. The ACS has been active, advocating against cigarette smoking as well as demanding that cigarette companies not target children. The ACS has been incredibly successful, advocating for the general public, on the cancer risks brought on by cigarette smoking.

"It was the American Cancer Society that was responsible for getting all the CEOs of the various tobacco companies

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before Congress to testify concerning the effects of nicotine," Dr. Kelly recalls. "I was actually in the room that day when those CEOs raised their hands and said that nicotine was not addictive. And of course, you know what has happened since that time. All of them have confessed that nicotine use is an addictive behavior."

There may not be anything as dramatic as the testimonies of the cigarette company' CEOs during the next year, but you can expect effective leadership and continued advocacy for the general public and for cancer patients. Dr. Kelly anticipates a very busy year of meetings with Congress as well as board meetings with representatives of the seventeen divisions that make up the ACS.

"We will be testifying before Congress for increased budgets for the CDC (Center for Disease Control) and the NIH (National Institute of Health)," Dr. Kelly explains.

"It's going to take a tremendous amount of collaboration," he says confidently about the challenge ahead of him. "I am comfortable leading because I know I have prepared myself to do this. My life experiences have prepared me to do this. I am prepared from an emotional standpoint because I have lost people to this disease.

"I lost an uncle to cancer. At the time I didn't know what he died of because I was still in junior high school. All I knew is that he was very ill and that he passed away. But the family didn't talk about it, because during that era, cancer was a very hush-hush disease in the African American community. People just didn't talk about it if you had cancer. When I actually finished college, my mom and I were talking, and she said something about my uncle dying from cancer. But when she mentioned it, I must have had a look of shock on my face. And she said, 'You mean you really didn't know what your uncle died from?' And I said no; you all never told me.

"So it was at that point that I really decided that I wanted to do something to really grow cancer control. I was not knowledgeable of the American Cancer Society at the time, but I knew I wanted to do something. And in 1974, I had an American Cancer Society person to come to the door, and that person told me that my neighbors had chosen me to lead our neighborhood campaign.

"It was a residential crusade," Dr. Kelly recalls. "You would get a volunteer in each community to pass out life saving information about cancer. You would take that information from door to door. You would then ask them for a small contribution. That's how we raised many of our dollars during that time frame."

Three years later the same staff person asked Dr. Kelly if he would be interested in serving as a unit director; he accepted the position and served in that capacity for two years. Two years later he was asked to serve as president of the same unit; and again he accepted.

"I am very comfortable with leadership," Dr. Kelly explained. "I am comfortable leading and I am comfortable collaborating. When it's my time to lead I am very comfortable doing that. I don't shy away from leadership.

"I know this organization like I know the back of my hand," he adds." I have worked at every level of this organiza-

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tion. I know this organization."

Dr. John R. Seffrin, Ph.D., CEO of the ACS agrees: "It's the John Kellys of the world that make the American Cancer Society what it is. He will help chart the course for our organization to bring this disease under control for all groups."

The timing could not be any better. The first African American to serve as Chairman of the Board, Dr. Kelly takes the helm of the ACS at a time when there is a significant disparity in the incidence of cancer in the African American community, particularly in the male population. For example, the rate of prostate cancer for African American men is twice the rate of their white counterpart. And African American men are twice as likely to die from the disease from not being detected early and treated early.

"If we are going to make a real difference with this disease; and I am using prostate cancer as an example: We are going to have to collaborate with African American organizations to reach that audience.

"I can tell you that African Americans, to a large extent, are still very much, somewhat gun-shy of experimental projects," Dr. Kelly adds. "You look at what happened at Tuskegee, it is no wonder that African Americans are skeptical about participating in clinical trials for cancer.

"We have just signed an agreement with 100 Black Men of America and Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity. They are going to help the American Cancer Society to meet with audiences we probably would not be able to meet with. They are going to get us into the door and give us access to those groups that we need to have access to, to educate them about prostate cancer, to educate them about early detection, to educate them about treatment for the disease. Otherwise we probably would not be able to reach these people.

"I am very much self-assured and I am very comfortable with my skills," Dr. Kelly says of his abilities and desire to lead the ACS. "I wanted to be sure, when the time was right, for me, if that opportunity ever presented itself - to lead this organization - that I was prepared to do that and that no one could say that John Kelly was put in that role because they needed an African American at that time. I wanted everybody to be able to say, 'Well here's a person who has been engaged with the organization at every level, and has truly paid his dues, and is deserving of everything the organization has for him to at this time.' That time is here."

Dr. John R. Kelly earned his bachelor's degree at Alcorn State University, his master's at Wayne State University, and his doctorate degree at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg. He is married to the former Bernell Topp, who is the principal of Jeff Davis Elementary School in Biloxi. They have two daughters: Felice, a recent graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi, is a cancer control specialist with the American Cancer Society Mid-South Division. Kristi is a sophomore psychology major at Tougaloo College.

FROM THE BENCH

RAISE YOUR RIGHT HAND: ALL ARE ENTITLED TO EQUAL AND EXACT JUSTICE

by Judge John H. Whitfield

When I took office on January 1, 1995, I took an oath that I would administer justice without respect to a person's race, color or religion. I took an oath to render equal justice to the poor and to the rich alike. I took an oath to faithfully and impartially discharge and perform all duties incumbent upon me as Circuit Court Judge for the Second Circuit Court District of Mississippi according to the best of my ability and understanding, **agreeably to the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution and laws of the State of Mississippi. So help me God.** The oath that I took was the same oath that judges across the nation have taken since this great nation was formally established.

The oath of office administered to judges is a profound statement. In essence, the oath tells the world that each judge who ascends to the bench agrees before man and their Creator that they will administer justice equally, impartially and in a fair manner despite one's race, creed, color, gender, religion, national origin, speech, weight, shoe size, hair style or dress. All are to be treated with respect and dignity. The rights of one citizen are as important as any other citizen.

If taken seriously, the oath of office administered to judges serves as a guiding light in their ventures on the bench, in their ventures as ministers of justice. I say ministers of justice because to be a judge, that is a good judge, one must be willing to accept a calling to serve. The calling that I am referring to is akin to that of a Religious Minister or a truly dedicated and professional Teacher. You must be willing to make personal sacrifices, endure extreme hardships and suffer criticism — sometimes without just cause — all while maintaining your sense of direction and commitment to the task at hand.

The oath of office declares that a judge's allegiance, loyalty and fidelity are to the Constitutions of the United States of America and the State of Mississippi and the laws associated therewith. Judges are not, and should not, owe any allegiance to any group, individual, cause or political party. The judicial branch of government must be independent – independent of the Legislative and Executive branches of government.

By maintaining independence, judges will vest themselves with the ability to make decisions without regard to the political or other consequences that may occur. Under the present system of electing judges, if a judge makes a decision that one does not like — although the decision may be absolutely correct under the circumstances and the law — that judge is likely to have opposition in the next election. Nevertheless, since the effort to oust a disfavored judge is more often than not founded upon something other than a sincere desire to put someone better into office who will work for the best interests of the entire community and not just one

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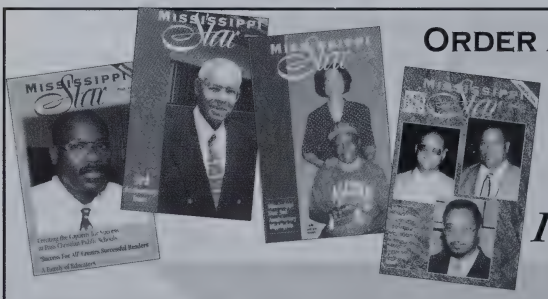

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person, group or cause, the judge is likely to endure personal attacks on his or her character. Personal attacks appear to be the current trend that is riding a wave across the country at this time, especially in judicial elections. If a judge makes a decision that adversely affects a local legislative body, that body may choose to reduce funding needed for the judiciary to function properly, or the body may fail to purchase necessary equipment, supplies or the like.

Do we need to change the way Mississippi selects its judges? Should there be another funding mechanism created for the judicial system? I do not know. However, these are issues that the community should begin to discuss if it truly want to have a judiciary that is independent.

The community must support the judiciary just as it does the executive and legislative branches of government. If the city council or board of supervisors were making a decision that would directly affect your immediate community, you — the members of the community — would not hesitate to fill the council chambers or the board room. However, when one looks out over the courtroom, many times no one is present. The thousands of decisions judges make annually have more impact — directly and indirectly — on your life than any other decisions made by any other elected officials. Nevertheless, courtroom observers are not watching what goes on in the courtroom. Nor is there anyone disseminating unbiased and accurate information on the inner workings of the judicial branch of government to the community at large.

The media only reports the most sensational of all of the cases. Thus, the public leaves the judiciary largely unchecked, unaccountable, and unsupervised. Therefore if you are displeased with the process or the way a given judge or prosecutor handles him or herself in the courtroom, please do not complain. In a representative democracy such as the one we have in America, one usually gets the type of governmental representation, leadership and service one demands.

Maybe you trust all judges, district attorneys, probation officers, police officers, lawyers, clerks, and court reporters? Although I believe that the vast majority of these individuals are truly professionals, you must take my word for it. For those that are not professional, you may find out the hard way.

Do you know if your judges are courteous, professional, stern when necessary, yet compassionate at times? Have you seen the process in action? If not, you should take the time to visit your city, justice, county, circuit, or chancery court. **Not just one courtroom, but several. These courts are public forums which means they are open to the public.** Come in and learn more about what really goes on in the judicial branch of government. Become the eyes and the ears of your community by volunteering your time and becoming a courtroom observer. Call and arrange tours for youth groups and adults alike. In the end, the more you know about what goes on in the judiciary, the more effective you will be because with knowledge comes understanding, and with understanding power.

***Nothing in this article is intended to be interpreted as legal advice. For legal advice, consult an attorney of your choice. *From the Bench with Judge John Whitfield* is a public information service cosponsored by WBSL 1190 AM and *The Mississippi Star*. *From the Bench with Judge John Whitfield* airs each Thursday at 4:00 p.m. on WBSL Radio 1190 AM.**

GUEST WORD

THE Y2K BUG *By George W. Allen Jr.*

With the end of the century there have been lots of scary predictions made about bad things happening in the year 2000. It is suggested that water will be cut off, bank accounts will be wrong, airplanes will fall from the sky, food shortages will occur, and power outages among other bad things.

All these bad predictions are based upon the fact that all the goods and services in our society are produced with the aid of computers. Computers have internal calendars that are in numeric form. This form, if limited to six digits could cause problems in the year 2000. To illustrate this form, consider the date of July 4, 1999. It would be 070499 in a computer date form. Now how could this cause a problem? Well if I told a computer that I was born on July 4, 1950, it would be stored in the computer as 070450. To calculate my age the computer would subtract that date from the current date say (70499). The computer would make the subtraction 070499-070450 and get a value of 49, which would be my correct age.

If I asked the computer next year, July 4th 2000, it would make the calculation 070400 (the current date) – 070450 (my birthdate) and get a result of –50 which would suggest that I haven't been born yet. The problem is that computers that are not Y2K compliant only use two digits in the year for all dates. In computers that are Y2K compliant, dates are represented with 8 digits. The above calculation would be 07042000-07041950, and would give the correct value of 50. Remember, I will be a year older. So the Y2K problem called the Y2K bug will cause problems for computers that use 6 digits to represent dates. The term Y2K has the following meaning: Y=Year. 2=2. K=killo, which means thousand. Therefore Y2K means Year 2000.

Now how can a miscalculation cause all the gloom and doom in these predictions? Well we can see that any processes that involve aging such as interest or penalties owed or due a financial customer could cause a problem. However, there are a lot of computer functions that do not include aging and those that do must have the date as 8 digits before the year 2000. As a precaution we should keep billing receipts and bank statements from the last three months of 1999 and the first three months of the year 2000.

The Y2K bug is also lurking in large computer systems. Such systems as the utilities and reservation systems are prone to the Y2K bug if not corrected. In these systems, large computers communicate with smaller computers (called embedded systems) to get work done such as opening or closing a valve or switch. Before a large computer sends a command to an embedded computer system it has to know the status of that computer so the larger one asks the smaller one for its status. In many cases the smaller computer responds with a status that includes the current date. If the smaller computer reports a bad status or date, the larger one will declare the smaller computer "down" or "malfunctioning" and the needed work will not be done.

A test was performed in London on a nuclear power plant where the computer system's calendar was advanced to the year 2000, and the computer shut the reactor down. The same test was performed at a nuclear power plant in the state of Pennsylvania and the operator's consoles went dark.

The problems with embedded systems are they are too old and using obsolete chips, no documentation and many of the vendors supplying these systems are no longer in business. This situation will present possibilities for glitches (problems) in the year 2000, but should be of short duration.

Personal computers may have the Y2K bug depending upon their date of manufacture. The Y2K bug will show up in personal computers running programs where aging is used causing inaccurate calculation. There are programs on the market that can detect and correct this problem.

Many foreign countries will not be ready when the year 2000 arrives which will cause some problems in international transactions such as ordering foods and vegetables, but this also will be of short duration because of the money at risk. Wherever there is money at risk the effects of the bug will be small or nonexistent.

In summary, the Y2K bug will show up in the early part of the year 2000, but will not produce the gloom and doom predicted. So happy New Year and all the best in the next millennium.

George W. Allen, Jr. is an electronics/computer specialist and currently resides in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

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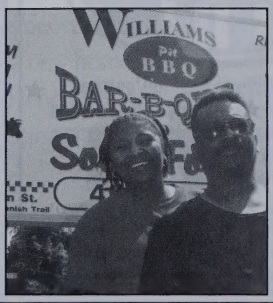

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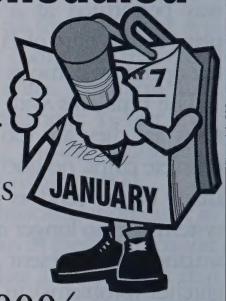

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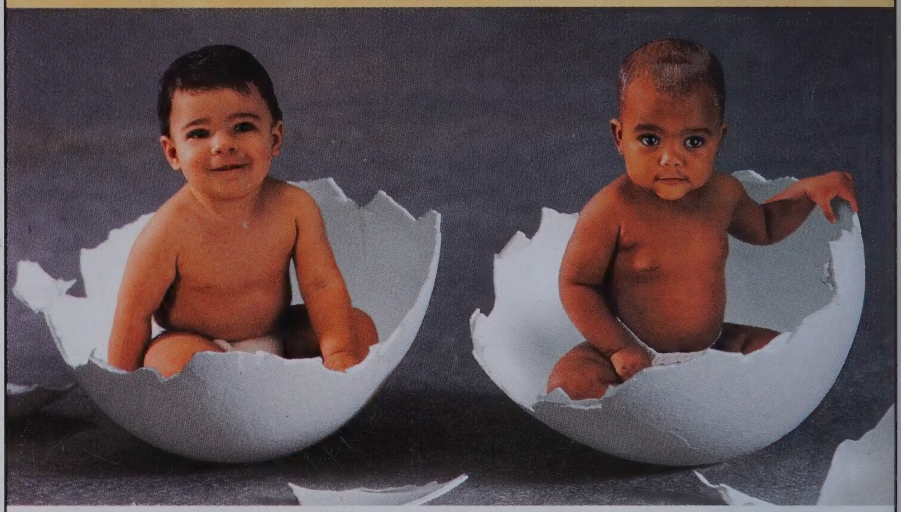

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